

**CLAIMS**

We claim:

1. A method for spawning a lower priority task from a higher priority task comprising:
  - (a) receiving a message from a remote administrator; and
  - (b) launching a lower priority task.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of launching said lower priority task includes an agent.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of receiving said message from said remote administrator includes a dispatcher.
4. The method of claim 3, further comprising said dispatcher placing said message in a data structure.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising said dispatcher setting a flag for signaling receipt of said message.
6. The method of claim 5, wherein the step of launching said lower priority task includes an agent, said agent receiving said flag and reading said data structure.
7. The method of claim 6, further comprising said agent resetting said flag.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of launching said lower priority task includes responding to said message.
9. The method of claim 1, wherein said higher priority task includes maintaining a level of operation.

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- 5        10. A computer system comprising:  
          a higher priority task;  
          a remote administrator;  
          a message manager to receive a message from said administrator; and  
          a task manager to launch a lower priority task.
11. The computer system of claim 10, wherein said message manager is a dispatcher.
12. The computer system of claim 10, wherein said task manager is an agent.
13. The computer system of claim 10, further comprising a dispatcher manager to place said message in a data structure.
14. The computer system of claim 13, wherein said data structure stores said message received from said dispatcher manager.
15. The computer system of claim 14, further comprising a flag to indicate to said task manager receipt of said message in said data structure.
- 15        16. The computer system of claim 15, wherein said task manager reads said message in said data structure and launches said lower priority task in response to said flag.
17. The computer system of claim 16, wherein said task manager resets said flag following launch of said lower priority task.
18. The computer system of claim 10, wherein said higher priority task maintains a level of operation.

19. An article comprising:  
a computer-readable signal bearing medium;  
means in the medium for receiving a message from a remote administrator; and  
means in the medium for launching a lower priority task.
- 5        20. The article of claim 19, wherein the medium is selected from the group consisting of: a recordable data storage medium, and a modulated carrier signal.
21. The article of claim 19, wherein said message receiving means stores said message in a data structure.
- 10      22. The article of claim 21, further comprising said message receiving means indicating by a flag receipt of said message in said data structure to said launching means.
23. The article of claim 22, wherein said launching means resets said flag following launching of said lower priority task.
24. The article of claim 19, further comprising means in the medium for maintaining a level of operation by a higher priority level task.
- 15      25. A method for spawning a lower priority task from a higher priority task comprising:  
(c) receiving a message from a remote administrator;  
(d) storing said message in a data structure;  
(e) setting a flag to indicate receipt of said message; and  
(f) launching a lower priority task in response to said message.
- 20      26. The method of claim 25, further comprising maintaining a level of operation by said higher priority task.